

MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting Minutes May 18, 2007 Frederick Campus

MEMBERS PRESENT: Benjamin Bahan, PhD.; David Birnbaum; Connie Briscoe-Woodruff; William Bowman; John Ertel, Ph.D.; H. Mitchell Goldberg; Robin Kittleman; Charles Poyer; Barbara Raimondo, Esq.; David A. Severn, Esq; Carol Stevens; Laurie Yaffe.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ernest Hairston, PhD.; Sandra N. Harriman; Anjali Desai-Margolin; Edgar B. Palmer.

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL: Demetria Titus.

INTERPRETERS: Bobbie Quinn; Brenda Kelly-Frey.

President Raimondo called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. Roll call was called by passing around the roll call sheet.

A **MOTION** was made to approve the agenda with the addition of the report from the Student Life Committee -SECONDED – PASSED.

Closed Session minutes were distributed for review.

A **MOTION** was made to approve the closed session minutes – SECONDED – PASSED.

President's Report:

President Raimondo shared with the BOT members her experiences at the CEASD conference in May and at the two day Summit which followed the conference. Ms. Raimondo informed everyone that the National Agenda, a “roadmap” to improve deaf education at the local, state, and national level, was a topic of discussion at the conferences.

The Board members were told that the MSD Foundation officers have changed. Mr. Fred Weiner declined another term as President and has been replaced by Ms. Marisa Shockley. Starting in the fall, the MSDF Board meetings will alternate between the Frederick and Columbia

Campuses. At this time, the Foundation is developing a new application form for scholarship requests. The application will be shared with the MSD community once it is ready.

At 1:25 p.m. A **MOTION** was made to go into Closed Session to discuss a Personnel matter – SECONDED –PASSED. (attached)

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At 1:37 p.m. a **MOTION** was made to go into Open Session – **SECONDED – APPROVED.**

President Raimondo thanked all the Board members who donated their time on May 2nd to attend the Open Forums on the two MSD campuses.

Vice President Report:

Vice President Bahan reported on the CEASD Conference in May at Turf Valley in Ellicott City, MD. He told the Board that he showed his tape on audism- oppression based in the inability to hear - and suggested that this may be a good topic for discussion at a future Board retreat.

Dr. Bahan said that he listened to community members on the Frederick Campus at the May 2nd Open Forum. The first group of people who spoke to him was the Student Life Counselors then he heard from High School students who focused their attention on the subject of hearing students at MSD. Parents discussed issues regarding the special needs program. The Vice President felt the Open Forum gave him a good opportunity to meet members of the community.

Secretary's Report:

No Report

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer William Bowman reported that the checking account has not been used recently therefore, the amount in the account has not changed. Mr. Bowman reminded the Board members that there are three funds – Money Market, CD's and Mutual Funds. The returns in these funds have all been positive.

Treasurer Bowman recommended that the Board look at its investments in the future. A discussion was held regarding the BOT's financial relationship with the MSD Foundation. It was agreed that the Gift Fund Committee could review the financial management agreement between the BOT and the Foundation and make recommendations if they feel changes should be made.

Executive Committee Report:

The Open Forum on both campuses were discussed. It was agreed by Committee members that the Open Forum was very beneficial. On the Columbia Campus ASL fluent hearing students as well as the special needs program were of interest to the community members who attended. On the Frederick Campus the same topics were discussed along with the idea of establishing a day care program at MSD.

Concerns brought to the Board member's attention included:

- The infrastructure needed to offer a good special needs program on the Frederick

Campus

- Establishment of parameters for the hearing student program
- Maintenance of Deaf pride at the school should hearing students be admitted

President Raimondo informed everyone that she plans on sending a letter out to the community informing them of the Open Forum discussions and how the Board plans to proceed with the information they gathered.

Personnel Committee Report:

Committee Chairperson David Severn shared that it was time to do the annual review for the Superintendent. Mr. Severn suggested that the Board consider hiring former Board member Elliot Rosen as an independent consultant to perform the review. Mr. Rosen established the new procedure for the annual review last year and would be the right person to follow up with it this year.

A discussion was held regarding the State procurement regulations. It was also determined that the School's attorney should research the ethics laws in regards to the necessary months of separation required before a former Board member can be hired to work for the Board.

Mr. Severn and Ms. Raimondo agreed to investigate the procurement process for the evaluation and take necessary actions to have the evaluation done.

Mr. Severn informed the Board that the committee has started looking at the recommended changes to the Employee Handbook but that they have not completed their review.

Trusteeship Committee:

Committee Chairperson Sandy Harriman is unable to attend the meeting. In her stead, Mr. Charles Poyer will preside over the elections to be held during the meeting.

Bylaw Committee:

Dr. John Ertel distributed the committee's recommendation for bylaw changes.

A **MOTION** was made to amend the bylaws to allow the second quarterly Board of Trustees meeting to be moved from August to September -SECONDED – PASSED.

Fiscal Matters/Facilities Management Committee:

The members of the Board were informed that the FM/FM committee approves the recommended changes to the Out of State Tuition fee for the upcoming school year. A full Board vote will be necessary to finalize this change.

The Committee chairperson shared that the City of Frederick has some concerns with the new elementary school building. Ms. Suzanne Schwertman, MSD's CFO and Project Manager for the new building shared the City's concerns with the Board. She informed the Board members of the efforts put forth on the school's behalf by local politicians and that the final decision on the projected rests with the Board of Public Works. The meeting with the BPW is scheduled for May 23rd. Superintendent Tucker shared with the Board that he has met personally and by phone with City and State officials on the subject in an effort to resolve the concerns quickly.

At 3:30 p.m. Ms. Jenny Perry, Curriculum Specialist for MSD – Columbia Campus and three teachers, made a presentation to the Board. They shared their concerns that the dorm space on the Columbia Campus is not sufficient to accommodate the number of children who are in need of the program. The housing program in Columbia is offered to students who need additional language support or other assistance they are unable to get at home. The current accommodations do not meet the needs and therefore, many students either do not stay as many days as they would need or do not get to take advantage of the program at all. For many of the students, after-school programs or dorm exposure is part of their IEP's but there are only 35 beds for a program with an enrollment of 70. While many of the students live in close proximity to the school, they do not receive the extra support at home that their educational needs require. Ms. Perry and the teachers requested that the Board consider adding dorms to the Columbia Campus in the future.

A discussion was held regarding the distance requirements placed on the housing program at MSD. Some of the restrictions were placed by the previous BOT and others are placed by financial restrictions and state legislators. The mission of the Dorm program may need to be re-visited in order to justify expanding the program. The Student Life Committee will need to review this request and look at it from developmental and financial standpoints.

Student Life Committee:

SL Committee member, Ms Carol Stevens, shared with the Board members that she was made aware by members of the Columbia Campus Student Life Program that they have some concerns regarding their pay as well as the level of respect they receive from members of the MSD community. They shared with Ms. Stevens that communication between the dorm staff and classroom staff is a consistent problem. The staff members are willing to put their list of concerns in writing for Board review.

Mr. Bernie Palmer, Student Life Committee Chairperson explained that the SLC's in Frederick shared a similar concern regarding their pay but that they had a greater sense of belonging to the community. Administrators of the school were asked to be more visible to the Student Life staff. The Frederick and Columbia Campus staffs are starting to work together as a cohesive group.

At 3:57 p.m. A **MOTION** was made to go into Closed Session to discuss a Personnel matter – SECONDED – PASSED. (attached)

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At 4:32 p.m. A **MOTION** was made to go into Open Session – SECONDED – PASSED.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Tucker shared that the FY '08 budget looks very good. The State is looking at a one billion dollar shortfall but so far, no cuts to the MSD budget have been recommended. Mr. Tucker informed the Board members that the money requested for the equipment and furniture for the new elementary school has been received.

Mr. Tucker announced that Dr. Nancy Grasmick will be the speaker at the graduation ceremony this year.

The mid-point report for MSD's Middle States Association review is now posted on the school's website. The school is doing very well according to the report.

May 2, 2007 Open Forum Report:

Hearing Students at MSD: Board members were reminded that in order for hearing students to be admitted to MSD, the school must request a change in public law. The change must be approved before any pilot program can be instituted. Board members discussed the pros and cons of admitting hearing students who are proficient in ASL. Particulars of the change were reviewed such as admission criteria and growth potential.

Parents of children who have cochlear implants are interested in this pilot program as their children benefit from exposure to hearing children. Retention of the CI children would assist the school in the goal of maintaining high enrollment numbers.

Superintendent Tucker explained that the change in admission criteria would require MSDE backing. Dr. Nancy Grasmick has already expressed her approval of the idea. MSDE views this as reversed mainstreaming.

Special Needs program – Frederick Campus:

The Columbia Campus has an excellent program for children with additional disabilities. The concern is that children who live in the western counties of the state must travel long distances to get to the program. Also, parents are concerned because they feel their children are "rejected" by Frederick. A program in Frederick would allow children to reduce their travel time while maintaining appropriate services.

In order to provide services in Frederick, the current staff will need additional training and OT/PT staff will be required.

The pros and cons of expanding the program to Frederick were discussed. A clear plan on how to proceed would be necessary to make this program successful.

Day Care Program:

The Open Forum participants gave very positive feedback to the idea of establishing a day care center on school grounds. Where the program would be housed on the Columbia Campus was not clear to the community members. In Frederick, it was understood that the program would be in the new elementary school building.

At 5:10 p.m. A MOTION was made to support a feasibility study, to be conducted by MSD, in regards to opening a day care program at the school on both the Frederick and Columbia Campuses. SECONDED - PASSED.

At 5:30 p.m. A MOTION was made to set up an Ad Hoc Committee charged with developing the rationale and guidelines for admitting hearing students at the Maryland

School for the Deaf in the future. The Ad Hoc Committee will report back to the Board at the September 2007 meeting. **SECONDED - PASSED.**

At 5:50 p.m. A **MOTION** was made to have the 2007/2008 school year be used as a planning and training year to allow elementary and middle school children with special needs, who live west of Rt. 97, to be admitted to the Frederick Campus in the fall of 2008. Information regarding the plan to implement the program will be presented to the Board at the May 2008 meeting. **SECONDED – PASSED**

A discussion was held in regards to establishing the program in phases – the first phase could be Pre-K, Kindergarten, first and second grades, the second phase could be third, fourth and fifth grade and the third phase could be middle school.

Superintendent Tucker reminded everyone that in the planning of this program, the school would have to look at the budget as well as the impact on the Columbia Campus enrollment.

One Board member recommended that Community Open Forums such as the one held on May 2nd be continued as an annual event.

Open Forum: No one signed up for Open Forum

The dates for the 2007/2008 BOT meetings were chosen. They will take place on the following dates:

- September 7, 2007 – Columbia Campus
- November 16, 2007 – Frederick Campus
- February 8, 2008 – Columbia Campus
- May 16, 2008 – Frederick Campus

A **MOTION** was made to approve the recommended changes for the 2007-2008 Parent/Student Handbook – **SECONDED – PASSED.**

A **MOTION** was made to approve the recommended changes for the 2007-2008 Employee Handbook – **SECONDED – PASSED.**

A **MOTION** was made to approve the out of state tuition rates– **SECONDED – PASSED.**

Nominations for the Board of Trustee officers were taken.

A **MOTION** was made to vote by acclamation - **SECONDED – PASSED**

The following positions were filled:

- President – Barbara Raimondo
- Vice President – Ben Bahan
- Secretary – Anjali Desai-Margolin
- Treasurer – William Bowman

A **MOTION** was made to keep all the same committee members for the FM/FM, Education, Trusteeship, Student Life, Personnel, Bylaws and Gift Fund Committees - **SECONDED – PASSED**

The Executive Committee membership now consists of the four Board officers as well as Charles Poyer, Dr. John Ertel and Dr. Cynthia Neese-Bailes.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anjali Desai-Margolin

Secretary